

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

50X1-HUM

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT

SUBJECT Dissemination of Scientific
Information

DATE DISTR.

25 SEP 1959

NO. PAGES

1

REFERENCES

RD

50X1-HUM

DATE OF
INFO.PLACE &
DATE ACQ.

50X1-HUM

SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

67

STATE	#X	ARMY	#X	NAVY	X	AIR	#X	FBI	AEC	USTIA	#X
(Note: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)											

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR. 16 Aug. 1959

SUBJECT Dissemination of Scientific Information
in Czechoslovakia

NO. OF PAGES 13

DATE OF INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

50X1-HUM

PLACE ACQUIRED

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

**SUBJECT: Dissemination of Scientific Information in
Czechoslovakia.**

50X1-HUM

CONTENTS

- I. Access to Western Publications**
- II. Political Interference with Scientific Inquiry**

50X1-HUM

- VII. Reporting of Experimental Research Work**
- VIII. The Scientific Council of the Faculty of Medicine**
- IX. The Scientific Board**
- X. Other University Institutions**
- XI. The Czechoslovak Biochemical Society (CSBS)**
- XII. Separation of University and Academy Research Programs**
- XIII. Leading Czech and Slovak Biochemists**
- XIV. The Czechoslovak Society for the Dissemination of Political
and Scientific Knowledge (CSSPVS)**

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

50X1-HUM

Access to Western Publications

The Lekarsky Dum or "Medical House" on Sokolska Ulice in Prague is a documentation center for the use of members of the medical profession. Though located conveniently near Charles University, it is not subordinate to university control.

In addition to its own collection of books, pamphlets, and periodicals dealing with medicine and the biological sciences, the Lekarsky Dum maintains a central catalog of all such reference materials in the possession of other libraries and scientific institutes throughout Czechoslovakia.

with the exception of a gap for the years 1938-45, the supply of foreign periodicals available through the facilities of the Lekarsky Dum was reasonably adequate for research requirements.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

When an article was known to have been published in the West and could not be located in Czechoslovakia,

able to obtain copies by writing directly to the author.

50X1-HUM

by using a printed form letter composed along internationally accepted lines. These requests were almost always acknowledged as a matter of courtesy, even if the reply were only to say that the work desired was out of print. Articles solicited in this manner were received by the addressee in Czechoslovakia through the regular post with only the normal one or two week delay required for the inspection of all mail from abroad.

50X1-HUM

On the other hand, the situation as it concerned foreign books and monographs was much less satisfactory. Individual scientists were forbidden to order books from abroad, and the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University permitted its ten or more theoretical institutes to purchase only one foreign book apiece each year. The Lekarsky Dum had only a few Western books and a limited supply of Western monographs, and the situation at the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences

50X1-HUM

was not much better.

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

Though forbidden to order foreign books commercially, Czechoslovak scholars were permitted to receive single copies as gifts from acquaintances abroad.

Although the packages were delayed by censorship for periods of up to six months, delivery when finally made was routine and entailed no difficulty or embarrassment for the recipient. On the other hand, when sending copies of Czech books to persons residing abroad, the administrative obstacles placed were formidable.

As of 1958 East German scientists were able to purchase West German publications freely and legally at an advantageous one-to-one mark ratio. Among the West German books obtained in this manner were translations of the writings of well-known British and American chemists such as BALDWIN (fn) and Linus PAULING.

By contrast, only two American books on organic chemistry have been approved for distribution in Czechoslovakia:

The Czech translations of these works were reasonably complete but contained extraneous footnote material of a critical nature. Russian translations of foreign books often omitted entire chapters and were invariably prefaced by a lengthy analysis of the shortcomings of the work from the Marxist-Leninist point of view.

Political Interference with Scientific Inquiry

although the strongly-communist officials of the ~~department~~ constantly interfered with the personal and professional lives of the professors in many other ways, never any evidence of a serious effort to impose a dogmatic Marxist-Leninist approach upon the teaching of medicine in the classroom. Such attempts had been made in previous years, but they had failed completely.

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

- 5 -

When writing for publication, on the other hand, Czechoslovak doctors and medical researchers were more closely controlled. The degree of political interference with the content of a scientific work varied considerably with the subject matter. For instance, in Czechoslovakia (as in the USSR itself) biology and genetics were politically-sensitive branches of science. Until there occurred a change in the official attitude as described below, Czechoslovak scholars were required in their writings to pay homage to the Soviet biologists OPARIN and LEPESHINSKAYA while never daring to mention the name of the Czech-born MENDEL.

50X1-HUM

Oparin is respected as an authority in his field but Lepeshinskaya is scorned as a mere Party careerist.

in the spring or summer of 1958 an entire issue of Yezmir, the official journal of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, was devoted to the subject of heredity. At the time, modern Western theories in this field were favorably mentioned while those of the notorious LYSZENKO were virtually ignored. In particular, an article in which Dr. HOLUB (fnu), described as the managing editor of Yezmir and a leading Party figure, openly praised the work of certain Western authorities in this branch of science and implied that much was to be learned from them.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

this change in editorial policy on the part of Yezmir a change had occurred in the biological "line" in the Soviet Union. Before this time, it would not have been prudent for a Czechoslovak scientist even to speak of chromosomes as being the chief determinant in heredity.

50X1-HUM

A similar reversal of the official position occurred with respect to cybernetics. This capitalist-inspired mathematical doctrine was taboo until, in or about 1957, there appeared a Czech translation of a book by the Soviet KOLMAN (fnu) in which he urged that cybernetics be recognized and accepted as a legitimate branch of materialistic science. Thereafter, cybernetics became a respectable subject for discussion in Czechoslovak learned circles.

50X1-HUM

biochemistry, though closely allied to biology, was nevertheless a much less controversial branch of science.

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

- 8 -

Reporting of Experimental Research Work

[redacted] the experimental research work conducted at 50X1-HUM the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Prague was usually performed by staff members working individually or in pairs, rather than in large, well-organized teams as at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (or in the West). Because of this dispersal of resources, it was difficult for the faculty administration to coordinate the efforts of its professors or even to assemble systematic information on what they were doing.

The first attempt to establish a centralized reporting procedure was made in or about 1955, when faculty members engaged in research were instructed to make periodic progress reports to the vice dean (prodekan) for research. It was quickly found, however, that the task was too much for one man, and in or about 1957 a new institution called the Scientific Council (vedenska rada) was established for the purpose of exercising closer supervision and control over individual research projects.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

The Scientific Council of the Faculty of Medicine

50X1-HUM

by
figures as Professor HOREJSI (fnu), the chairman of the council, and Professor REINIS (fnu), the vice dean for research.

Dr. Horejsi had the rank of university professor and was nominally the chief of the Institute of Hematology. However, he had no teaching responsibilities and was regarded by his colleagues as a scientific administrator rather than as a professor in the true sense of the word. He was the only leading official of the Faculty of Medicine who was also a member of the Academy of Sciences. Furthermore, before coming to the University he had been chief of the Central Laboratory of the Prague General Hospital, a position which was subordinate to the Ministry of Health rather than to the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Because of Horejsi's background, it was generally assumed that he had been assigned to the Faculty of Medicine to represent the specialized research interests of the Academy of Sciences or the Ministry of Health, or both. In practice, Dr. Horejsi as chairman of the Scientific Council concentrated on projects which would be of most usefulness to the agencies mentioned, whereas Dr. Reinis as vice dean for research supervised the more theoretical research work undertaken by graduate students for the purpose of earning their advanced degrees.

The top administrative positions in the Faculty of Medicine, those of the dean and vice rector, were held by active communists. On the other hand, Drs. Horejsi and Reinis were non-political in their attitude, though they may or may not have been Communist Party members. Their approach to their work was objective and businesslike, and under their leadership the Scientific Council enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy within its sphere of responsibility. 50X1-HUM

this
relatively new academic institution was in the process of extending its authority into fields formerly under the jurisdiction of the Scientific Board (vedoucky sbor).

Under procedures in effect in 1958, each faculty member engaged in research was required to make an oral report every three months at a meeting of his chair (katedra). Every six months a written report had to be submitted to the secretary of the chair for transmission to the chairman of the Scientific Council. The council at that time had begun to take steps to establish uniform standards for the advanced degrees of candidate of sciences and doctor of sciences. It was also influential in matters concerning faculty participation in international

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

- 10 -

50X1-HUM

scientific conferences and exchanges of personnel.

50X1-HUM

Still another function of the Scientific Council was its role in the awarding of prizes for distinguished experimental work. For example,

[redacted] award of from 800 to 1,000 crowns. The recommendation was made by the Scientific Council to an unrecalled government ministry.

The Scientific Board

Despite the growing authority and influence of the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Medicine, the examination of candidates for advanced degrees was still performed as of mid-1958 by the Scientific Board (nauchnyy sbor fakul'teta). This was the new name given in or about 1957 to the academic institution traditionally known as the "Faculty Board" (fakul'tetni sbor). It was composed of many—but not all—of the professors and associate professors of the Faculty, and had functions somewhat analogous to those of an academic senate.

The most important requirements for the degrees of candidate of sciences and doctor of sciences were mastery of the Russian language and a satisfactory record of activity in the Communist Party or trade union. Once these politically inspired prerequisites had been met, however, a graduate student had still to present himself before the Scientific Board for an oral examination and defense of his thesis. Just as in a Western university, the candidate would read a report of his experimental work and then reply to questions and criticisms from a designated "opponent" as well as from other of the faculty members present. After discussion, the board would vote by secret ballot whether or not to award the degree.

The members of the Scientific Board were appointed by the dean's office (dekanat). [redacted] the criteria of selection were not exclusively political, since at least two professors had been named to the board who were generally known to hold anti-
communist views. [redacted]

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

Nevertheless, the meetings of the Scientific Board were well organized and were easily controlled by the communist leadership.

Other University Institutions

Another institution for the exchange of scientific information within the Faculty of Medicine was the seminar held monthly by most of the theoretical institutes. These meetings were called for the purpose of discussing specific topics and were well prepared in advance.

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]
50X1-HUMCONFIDENTIAL

- 11 -

[REDACTED] 50X1-HUM

A schedule of forthcoming seminars was regularly published in the Journal of Czech Physicians (časopis Lekaru Ceskych), and it was customary to invite guests having an interest in the subject matter to participate in the seminar along with the staff of the sponsoring institute.

The "proseminar" was a less formal meeting held once a week, usually without guests, for the purpose of coordinating the presentations to be made at the forthcoming seminar.

Like the katedra or "chair", which was an administrative body somewhat similar to an academic department in an American university, the seminar and proseminar were strongholds of professionalism which for the most part succeeded in maintaining their independence of political direction and control.

50X1-HUM

The Czechoslovak Biochemical Society (CSBS)

The Czechoslovak Biochemical Society (Ceskoslovenska Biochemicka Spolecnost - CSBS) was founded in or about 1956.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] there existed some sort of Slovak affiliate of the national organization and [REDACTED] its center was in Bratislava.

50X1-HUM

The CSBS had no fixed headquarters in Prague. [REDACTED] dues of from 10 to 15 crowns a year at the office of the above-mentioned Dr. Horezji, professor of hematology and chairman of the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Prague.

50X1-HUM

[REDACTED] as many as 60 scientists turned up at one meeting in 1957 or 1958 to listen to a lecture on enzymes by a visiting professor

50X1-HUM

Membership in the CSBS was voluntary, and the aims of the organization were scientific rather than political. A candidate for admission was expected to have achieved a certain standing in his profession, as demonstrated by a record of active experimental work. Papers which were read and subjected to a critique at the monthly meetings of the Society were often published later in one of the learned journals.

Generation of University and Academy Research Programs

In addition to providing an important channel for the transmission of scientific information, the CSBS also served as virtually the only common meeting ground for the personnel of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Organic Chemistry and their opposite numbers in Czechoslovak universities. [REDACTED] the dividing line between university

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

- 12 -

50X1-HUM

and academy was rigidly maintained, [redacted] it was rare indeed for any one individual (like Dr. Horesji) to have a foot in both camps.

50X1-HUM

[redacted]
[redacted] the Academy's Institute of Organic Chemistry was so much better equipped than the corresponding facilities at Charles University [redacted]

50X1-HUM

Leading Czech and Slovak Biochemists

[redacted] the most outstanding Czech members of the Czechoslovak Biochemical Society were Dr. Frantisek SORN and Professor Josef KOSTER. The most prominent Slovak member of the CSBS is Professor NIEDERLAND (fnu).

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

Dr. Sorn, a vice president of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, was the founder of the academy's Institute of Organic Chemistry. [redacted]

Professor Koster was chief of the Biochemical Department of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Charles University in Prague. [redacted]

50X1-HUM

[redacted] Professor Nederland [redacted]

[redacted] was on good terms with both Sorn and Koster. He was rumored to be a former development [redacted]

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

- 13 -

50X1-HUM

The Czechoslovak Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge (CSSPVZ)

50X1-HUM

the Czechoslovak Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge (Ceskoslovenska spolecnost pro sireni politickych a vedeckych znalosti) (CSSPVZ) as an association with officials but no members. one of the communist-sponsored "mass organizations" in the usual sense of the term.

in the winter of 1957-58, most of the professors of the Second Institute of Medical Chemistry of Charles University were contacted on the telephone by a woman secretary of the CSSPVZ who was trying to obtain the services of a speaker. Each professor in turn begged off on one pretext or another, and then suggested the name of one of his colleagues as being well qualified to give the talk. Finally Dr. Jiri DUCHON, as the man least able to say "no," was drafted for the occasion.

Dr. Duchon was persuaded to continue giving talks under CSSPVZ auspices. For each lecture he received about 50 crowns, which was enough to buy a kilogram of the best quality butter. Duchon gave elementary talks on hygiene every other month or so to working-class audiences in various parts of Prague and its suburbs. Typical topics were "Nutrition" and "Proper Sleeping Habits."

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

Professor Jan Sula, the Chief of the Cancer Research Laboratory of the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University, sometimes gave lectures on his specialty for the benefit of CSSPVZ audiences in or near the Prague district of Smichov, where he lived.

50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL